

## CLAIMS

We claim:

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1. A method of communicating between a graphical component library and an appearance manager, comprising:  
issuing, by the graphical component library, a rendering service request for a graphical component, the request including at least one component defining parameter; and  
receiving, by the appearance manager, the rendering service request for the graphical component and assigning appearance characteristics to the graphical component based upon the provided parameters.
  2. The method of claim 1, wherein the parameters include a part ID and a state ID, and wherein the assigned appearance information is based upon the part ID and state ID.
  3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
issuing, by the graphical component library, a request for a theme handle corresponding to a set of appearance characteristics;  
receiving, by the appearance manager, the theme handle request;  
identifying, by the appearance manager, a theme handle;  
issuing, by the appearance manager, the requested theme handle; and  
receiving, by the graphical component library, the requested theme handle.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the theme handle is issued to the appearance manager as one of the parameters in the rendering service request.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

issuing, by the appearance manager to the graphical component library, a message that the desired appearance characteristics have changed;

issuing, by the graphical component library to the appearance characteristic manager, a request for a new theme handle corresponding to a new set of appearance characteristics;

identifying, by the appearance manager, a new theme handle identifier; and

issuing, by the appearance manager to the graphical control library, the requested new theme handle.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the requested graphical component is a control.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein one of the parameters of the graphical component rendering service request is a location for the control.

8. A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 1.

9. A computer system having a processor, a memory and an operating environment, the computer system operable to perform the steps recited in claim 1.

10. A method of communicating between a graphical component library and an appearance manager, comprising:

issuing, by the graphical component library, a request for a theme handle corresponding to a set of appearance characteristics;

receiving, by the appearance manager, the theme handle request;

identifying, by the appearance manager, a theme handle;

issuing, by the appearance manager, the requested theme handle; and

receiving, by the graphical component library, the requested theme handle.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising issuing, by the graphical component library, a rendering service request for a graphical component, the request including at least one component defining parameter and wherein the theme handle is issued by the graphical component library as a component defining parameter.

12. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

issuing, by the appearance manager to the graphical component library, a message that the desired appearance characteristics have changed;

issuing, by the graphical component library to the appearance characteristic manager, a request for a new theme handle corresponding to a new set of appearance characteristics;

identifying, by the appearance manager, a new theme handle identifier; and

issuing, by the appearance manager to the graphical control library, the requested new theme handle.

13. A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 10.

14. A computer system having a processor, a memory and an operating environment, the computer system operable to perform the steps recited in claim 10.

15. A method of rendering a graphical component on the display of a computer system, comprising:

issuing, by a graphical component library, a rendering service request for the graphical component;

receiving, by an appearance manager, the rendering service request for the graphical component and assigning appearance characteristics to the graphical component; and

rendering, by the appearance manager, the requested graphical component on the display of the computer system according to the appearance characteristics assigned by the appearance manager.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the rendering service request includes at least one component defining parameter.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the parameters include a part ID and a state ID.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the parameter includes a location for the graphical component.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the parameter includes a theme handle corresponding to a set of appearance characteristics.

20. A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 15.

21. A computer system having a processor, a memory and an operating environment, the computer system operable to perform the steps recited in claim 15.

22. A method of communicating between a graphical component library and an appearance manager, comprising:

issuing, by the graphical component library, an information request regarding the appearance characteristics of a graphical component;  
receiving, by the appearance manager, the information request; and  
issuing, by the appearance manager to the graphical component library, the requested information.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the information request is for a graphical component having a plurality of parameters including a part ID, a state ID and a property ID.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the requested information is used to alter the graphical component.

SUB 22  
25. The method of claim 22, wherein the request is for information about a defined set of appearance characteristics for a number of graphical components.

26. A computer readable medium having computer executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 22.